



Wiltshire Local Plan

Planning for Amesbury

September 2023

Wiltshire Council

1. Introduction

1. 'Planning for Amesbury' is a guide to how the Local Plan Review, which will replace the Wiltshire Core Strategy, will affect the town of Amesbury over the coming years. It also considers the role of Porton Down and High Post as employment areas in the rural area close to the town, and sets out the evidence and processes that have informed the policies of the Local Plan that relate to Amesbury, as follows:

Table 1 Wiltshire Local Plan policies for Amesbury

Policy	Title
36	Amesbury Market Town
37	Boscombe Down
38	Porton Down

2. A table containing the Wiltshire Core Strategy planning policies and saved planning policies for Amesbury that have been reviewed through the Local Plan Review is included in Appendix 1, together with an explanation of whether they have been deleted or revised. The review of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and saved planning policies has been undertaken to ensure the Local Plan is consistent with up-to-date national planning policy, can continue to support delivery of sustainable development and can effectively inform planning decisions in Wiltshire over the new Local Plan period.
3. The Local Plan sets out what local priorities will shape development and future growth in Amesbury ('Place Shaping Priorities'). The Place Shaping Priorities include objectives revolving around improvements to the town centre, sustainable communities, sport and recreation, and improving sustainable transport options.
4. The Local Plan also sets a scale of growth, as part of a wider spatial strategy for Wiltshire, by which the town will expand over the Local Plan period (2020-2038). This is expressed in terms of homes over the Local Plan period. In Amesbury's case no additional land for homes or employment is proposed to be allocated, with additional growth already in the pipeline from allocations that were made through the Wiltshire Core Strategy. This document explains the context and rationale for these decisions.

5. This document summarises the growth that has taken place and continues to take place as a result of the developments that were planned through the Wiltshire Core Strategy and sets out local priorities moving forward into the new Local Plan period. Shaping the town’s future, to help deliver these priorities, this document explains the role of existing employment sites, the direction for the town centre, and how the Local Plan supports the services and facilities the community requires. Altogether it tells how the Local Plan moves forward the existing planning framework for the town to meet fresh challenges and additional needs.
6. This document therefore combines many strands of evidence gathered over the preparation of the Local Plan. It pulls together the comments and advice received from, amongst others, local residents, landowners, business and service providers who also influenced the Local Plan content through consultation.

2. Amesbury - Context and challenges

Table 2 Strategic context for Amesbury Market Town

Population	13,000 ¹	11 th largest of the county’s 16 main settlements.
Strategic role	Market Town	Potential for significant development to help sustain, and where necessary enhance, their services and facilities, promoting better levels of self-containment and viable sustainable communities.

7. Figure 1 below shows the settlement of Amesbury, along with the key environmental constraints that apply at the settlement.

¹ Census 2021, ONS, available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/draw/>

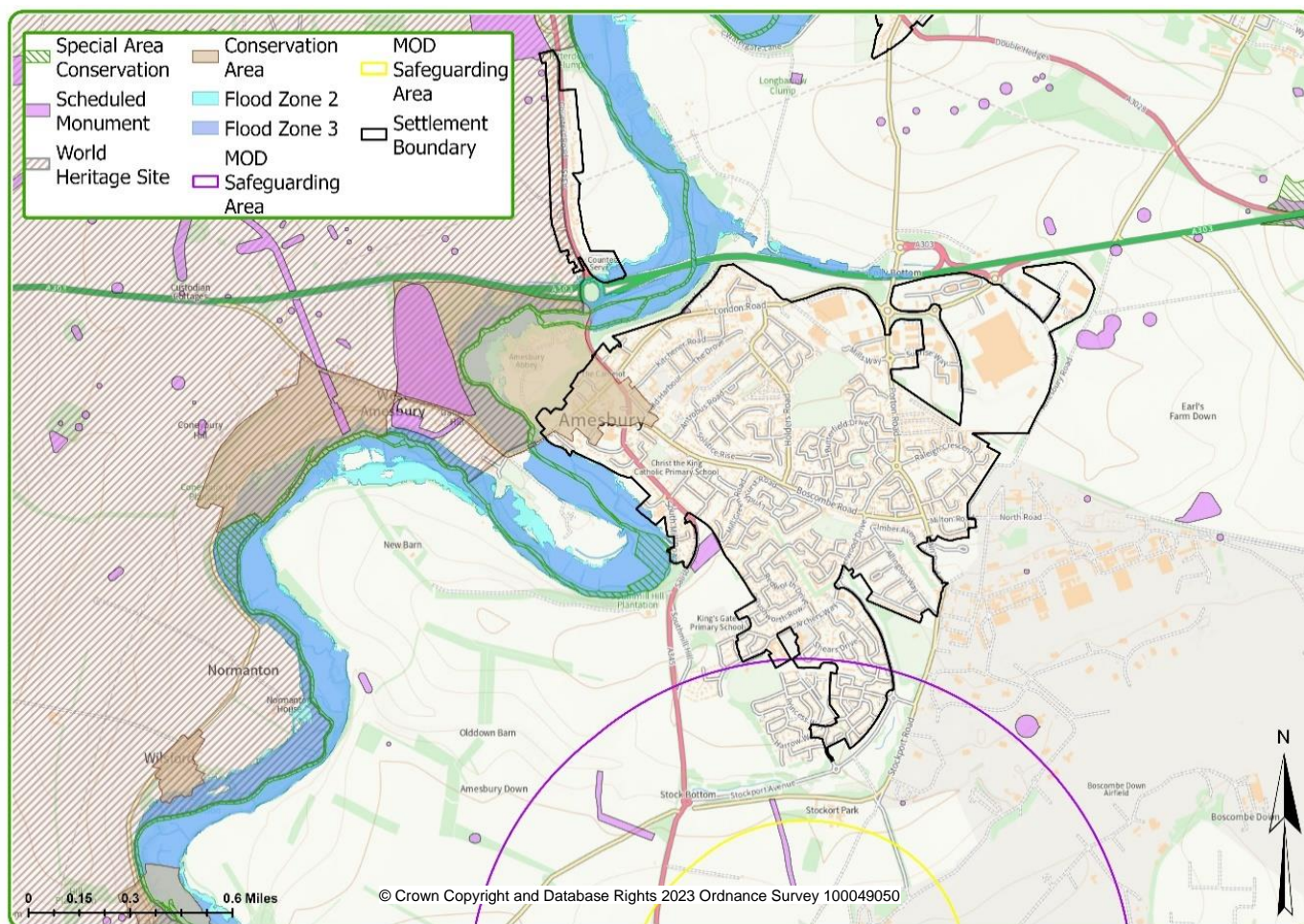


Figure 1. Environmental constraints and designations in Amesbury.

8. Amesbury is situated to the south-east of the county, south of Salisbury Plain which is a large military training area. The town is located on the A303 which is part of the strategic road network and serves as a major arterial route from London to the south-west. Along with its proximity to the A303, the A345 also passes through the town. There are records of congestion in the town centre, and pressure on key junctions.

9. The town is set within an ancient and archaeologically rich landscape, close to the UNESCO Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site to the west. Expansion of the settlement must conserve the character and qualities of the ancient landscape and its setting.

10. The town is flanked by the River Avon which flows to the west of the settlement and onward towards Salisbury. The River Avon is ecologically significant being designated as both a Special Conservation Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Areas of flood risk also surround the river corridor, along with areas of priority habitat. The River Avon has significant potential as a Green and Blue

Infrastructure asset for the town, along with its historic significance in the wider Stonehenge landscape.

11. The town centre is located to the northwest of the built area of the settlement, lying partly within a conservation area containing numerous listed buildings. Amesbury town centre provides an attractive and important service role function that supports both Amesbury town and the settlements within its rural hinterland. Amesbury's role as an important Market Town should be preserved and enhanced, wherever possible, with opportunities to improve the quality and legibility of the public realm. There may be opportunities to further capitalise on the town's unique advantage of being the closest large settlement to Stonehenge.
12. For the purpose of strategic planning, the Wiltshire Core Strategy grouped the three settlements of Amesbury, Bulford and Durrington as a collective Market Town because of their associated military garrisons and relatively close links to one another both geographically and functionally. Whilst these links remain, it was always intended that each settlement be planned to become more self-supporting separate communities, thus improving the local services and facilities they each have, to be less functionally reliant on each other. The Local Plan seeks to encourage the development of each community in its own right by considering each individual settlement's roles rather than taking the collective approach of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Therefore, the Local Plan recognises Amesbury as a 'Market Town' and Bulford and Durrington as two separate 'Large Villages'².

Boscombe Down

13. The southeast of Amesbury adjoins Boscombe Down aerodrome which is a nationally significant military aircraft testing site. The large site is shown hatched in blue in Figure 2, below. The 300ha site belongs to Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and is operated by QinetiQ on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Boscombe Down is a major employer in the local area, making an important contribution to South Wiltshire's economy.
14. Land around the aerodrome is subject to various statutory safeguarding zones and restrictions applied by DIO, including building height / light restrictions, bird strike management areas, separation zones from communications infrastructure, and explosives safeguarding zones. Land free of obstacles for 'forced landings'

² Planning for housing within rural communities, including Bulford and Durrington, is considered separately within the Rural Housing Requirements 2023 (September 2023) report.

around the airfield is also important for safe operation of the aerodrome. The need to preserve the operational capabilities of activities at Boscombe Down is an important consideration for plan-making in and around Amesbury.

15. Boscombe Down Airfield site contains a Principal Employment Area allocated by the Wiltshire Core Strategy, as shown in pink hatching within the northern part of Boscombe Down Airfield site, in Figure 2 below. The Local Plan does not carry forward this Principal Employment Area, for the reasons explain later in this document.

Porton Down

16. Porton Down is a Principal Employment Area situated approximately 5 miles from Amesbury, close to the nearby village of Porton. It is an internationally important centre for scientific research and development. It is strategically important site for a growing scientific research capacity in the UK. The main occupiers at Porton Down are the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Porton Science Park, the latter of which is operated by Wiltshire Council.

High Post

17. High Post is a Principal Employment Area and located on the A345, to the south of Amesbury on the main route between the town Amesbury and the nearby city of Salisbury. A range of users occupy the High Post site, including commerce/industrial uses, a petrol filling station and The Stones hotel. The site is on high ground with views across the surrounding landscape including to Old Sarum scheduled monument. The site has a close relationship to a golf course to the east and a the Chemring factory to the west.
18. The map below shows Amesbury in relation to the key employment clusters at Boscombe Down, Porton Down and High Post.

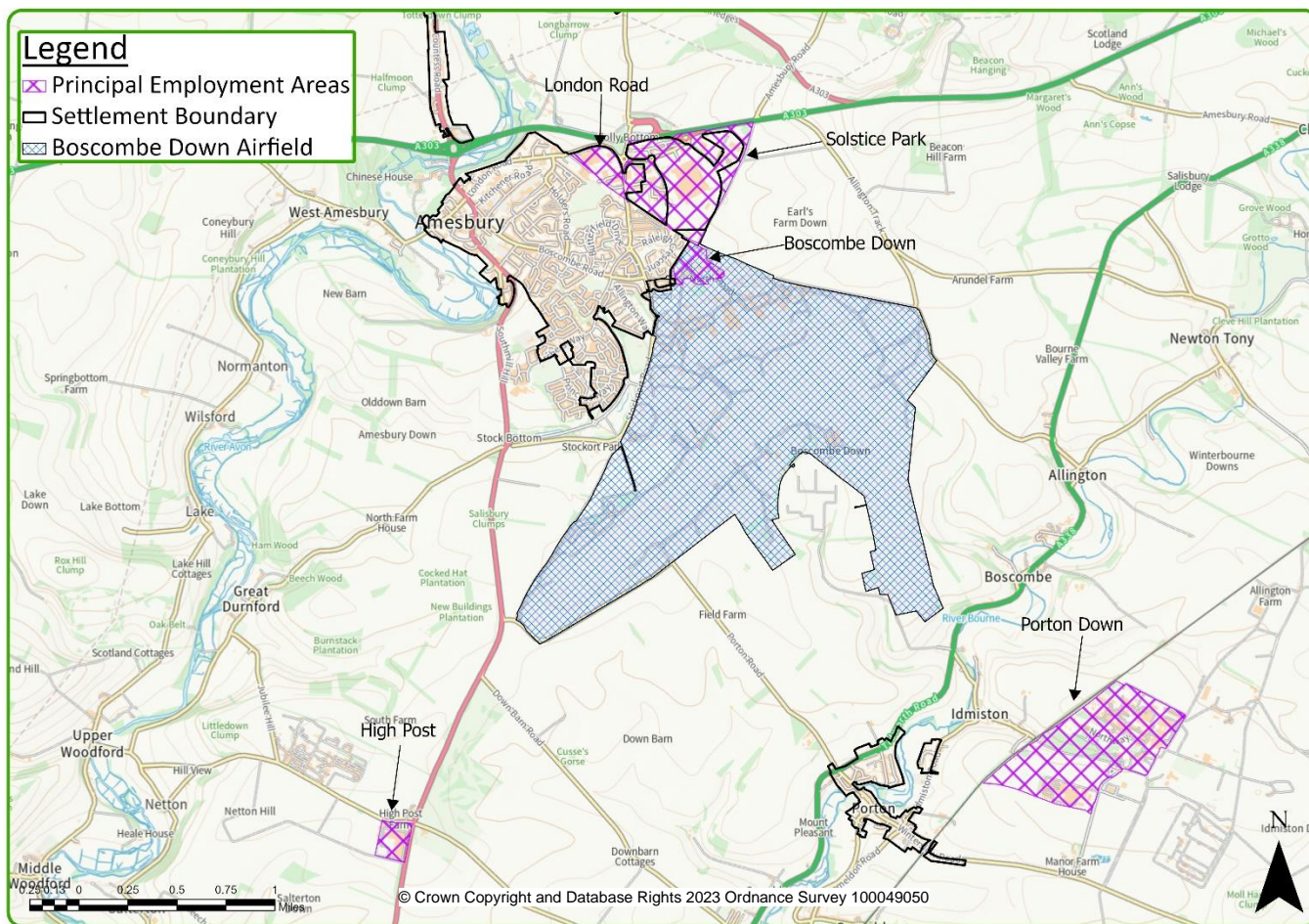


Figure 2. Geographical relationship between Amesbury, Boscombe Down, Porton Down and High Post

How has Amesbury developed?

19. The last 25 years or so has seen the delivery of major planned residential growth at Amesbury, with significant developments taking place at King’s Gate and Archer’s Gate to the south of the settlement. Development at Kings Gate is ongoing and will continue to be delivered into the early part of the Local Plan period.
20. The following diagram shows how much housing has been delivered in Amesbury from 2006 to 2022, compared to the Wiltshire Core Strategy

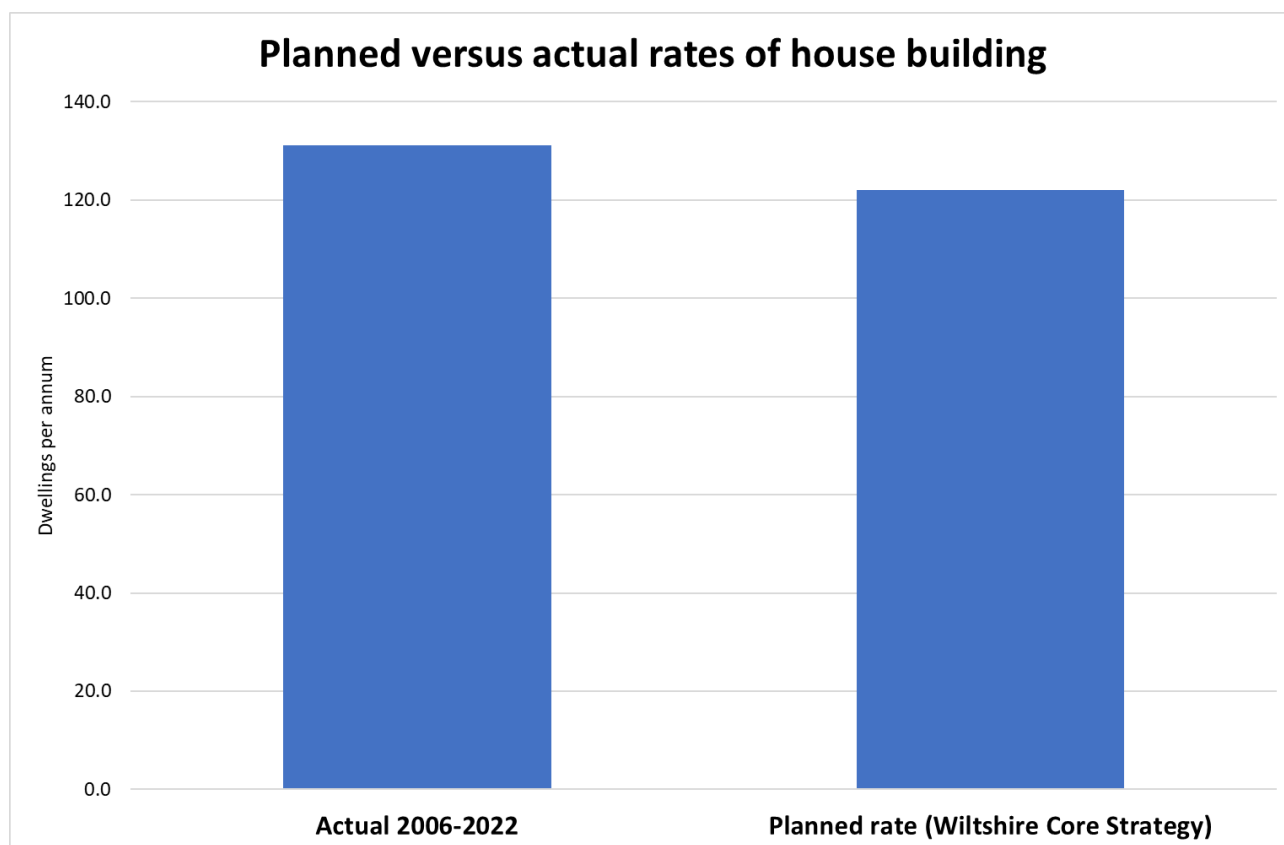


Figure 3: Wiltshire Core Strategy planned growth versus actual rates of house building at Amesbury from 2006 to 2022

21. A major employment site at Solstice Park has been developed to the northern edge of the town close to the A303. Solstice Park is a 64ha business park containing predominantly large warehouse, units, distribution units and ancillary offices. Along with the adjoining London Road business park, Solstice Park is designated as a Principal Employment Area which plays an important economic role in South Wiltshire. Solstice Park has good occupancy levels and low vacancy rates, reflecting buoyant demand for well-connected employment sites with infrastructure in place.

22. The Wiltshire Core Strategy also includes a Principal Employment Area and employment allocation within the northern part of the Boscombe Down site, in a location situated 'behind the wire'. To date the allocation has not been delivered and continues to be occupied by office and storage buildings associated with Boscombe Down aerodrome. The review of these policies concluded that the saved policy was not fit for purpose and it has been replaced by a broader policy relating to the wider Boscombe Down airfield site, which sets out general support for development on the site to enable expansion and intensification of uses to support the site's strategically important role as an employment area.

23. Principal Employment Areas are also located in the wider Amesbury area at Porton Down and High Post, which are expected to continue to play an important economic role through the Local Plan period.
24. Development of the out-of-centre Solstice Park has created job opportunities locally and provided for greater retail choice in Amesbury and the surrounding area.
25. The Wiltshire Retail and Town Centre Study (2020)³ concludes that overall, Amesbury has a healthy town centre which has adapted to recent changes in the retail landscape. There have been few significant developments within Amesbury town centre in recent years and the town centre is modest in scale with a localised retail function whose catchment is to some degree influenced by the nearby higher order centre of Salisbury. Amesbury does however have a good level of self-containment, benefitting from a range of services and facilities including three supermarkets. The convenience goods sector at Amesbury town centre has not experienced any material decline since the development of out-of-town shopping at Tesco and Home Bargains, and the town centre continues to benefit from the town centre Aldi. While Amesbury town centre has a limited catchment, it has a complementary role to the nearby city centre of Salisbury.
26. The map below illustrates the Wiltshire Core Strategy land use policies along with significant development sites at the town to illustrate how the town is expanding.

³ Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study (Avison Young, 2020)

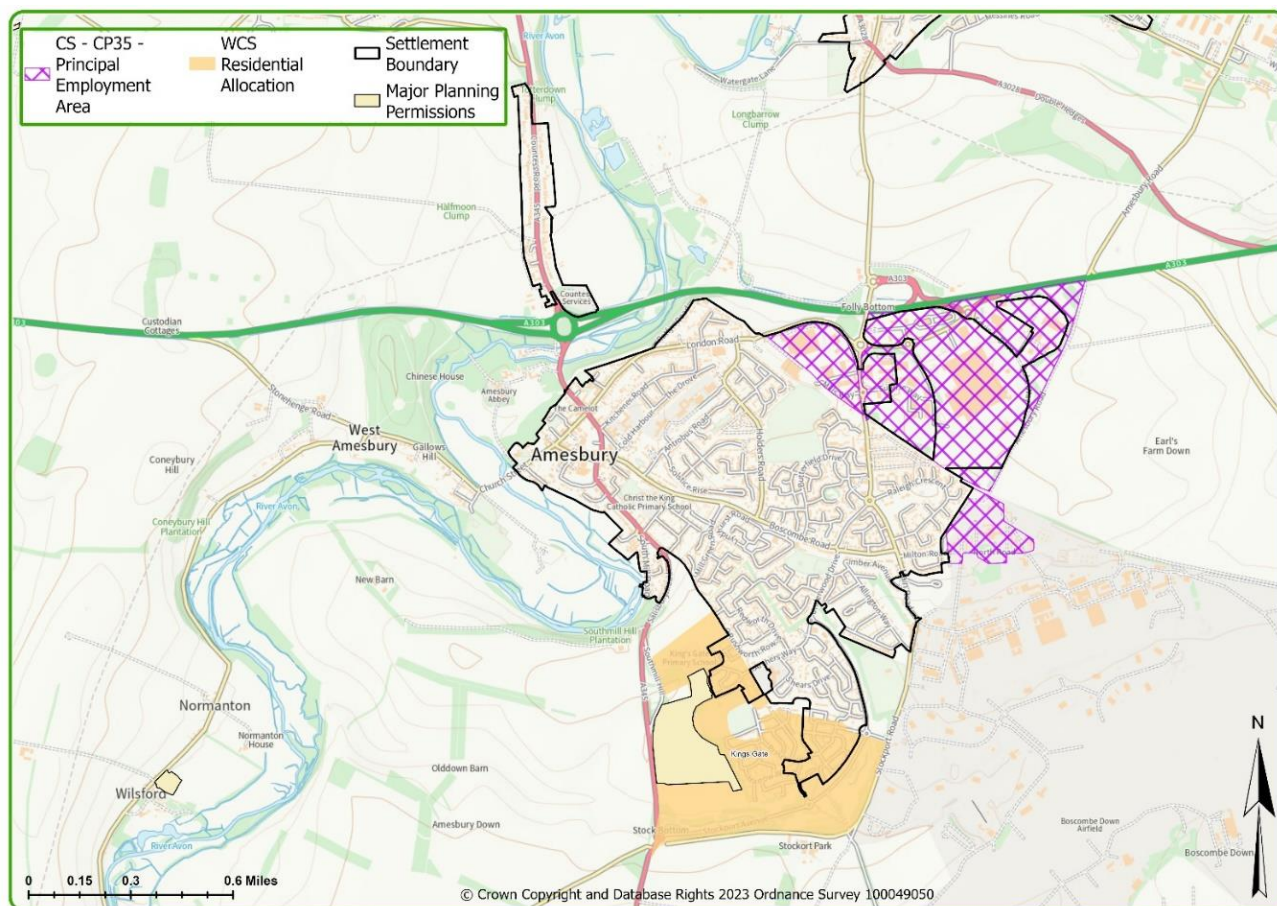


Figure 4. Existing development plan allocations and major planning permissions at Amesbury

Planning to 2038

27. Looking ahead, against the backdrop of its environmental context, the strategic direction that flows from how Amesbury has developed over recent years is in summary:

Amesbury has seen rapid residential growth in recent years. The town is situated within an historically sensitive landscape which presents a significant challenge in terms of identifying suitable land for further growth; albeit dwellings planned for in the last plan period will continue to be delivered in the coming years. Solstice Park and Boscombe Down will continue to support the local economy; capitalising on Amesbury’s proximity to the A303 and Porton Science Park. Opportunities will be explored for further specialist high quality employment at Boscombe Down to further benefit South Wiltshire’s economy.

28. A set of Place Shaping Priorities (PSPs) address matters first highlighted in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and new issues that now also need to be tackled as set out above. They result from working with Amesbury Town Council and wider consultation with the community and other stakeholders carried out in 2021. They are as follows:

Table 3: Place Shaping Priorities

<p>PLACE SHAPING PRIORITIES</p> <p>PSP1 Sustainable communities: Promote Amesbury as a more self-sufficient town, with the housing, infrastructure and employment opportunities available to encourage a diverse range of residents to live, work and enjoy leisure time in the town.</p> <p>PSP2 Sport and recreation: Improve recreational facilities and sports pitches in Amesbury.</p> <p>PSP3 Town centre: Encourage town centre improvements to the quality of the public realm and encourage development of tourism and tourist accommodation to capitalise on the town's proximity to Stonehenge.</p> <p>PSP4 Transport: Reduce congestion on the A345 and A303, with a view to improving the attractiveness of Amesbury town centre.</p> <p>PSP5 Active travel: Improve opportunities for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport options in and around Amesbury.</p> <p>PSP6 Boscombe Down and Porton Down: Support further development of specialist high quality employment at Boscombe Down / Porton Down.</p>
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29. PSPs sit alongside the spatial strategy for Amesbury. One of their purposes is to describe what growth intends to help deliver and how change should be managed. They form the basis for an overarching planning policy for Amesbury.
30. PSPs therefore provide a succinct strategic context within which to better understand the spatial strategy for the main settlements. They also set a framework to co-ordinate the high level and strategic role of the Local Plan with the function of neighbourhood plans prepared by town and parish councils that set more detailed visions for the future of each community. The two sets of plans therefore work in harmony.
31. PSPs are also used to influence how and where development will take place as an important part in the selection of sites for new development; albeit as there are no further allocations made at Amesbury, PSPs are frames to influence development opportunities that may arise through other avenues later in the Local Plan period, such as neighbourhood planning.

- 32. Scales of growth at the town, as set out in the Revised Spatial Strategy⁴, respond to the level of housing and employment growth that has taken place at Amesbury in recent years along with development that is still coming forward as a result of planned commitments; within the context of the significant environmental (heritage) constraints at the town.
- 33. The new strategy identifies a requirement of 530 additional homes for the Local Plan period 2020 to 2038. However, there are homes committed under the Wiltshire Core Strategy that are yet to be delivered that are expected to come forward in the early part of the Local Plan period. Over the Local Plan period this represents a decrease in the rate of house building compared to the high levels of growth that were enabled through the Wiltshire Core Strategy and its predecessor plans.

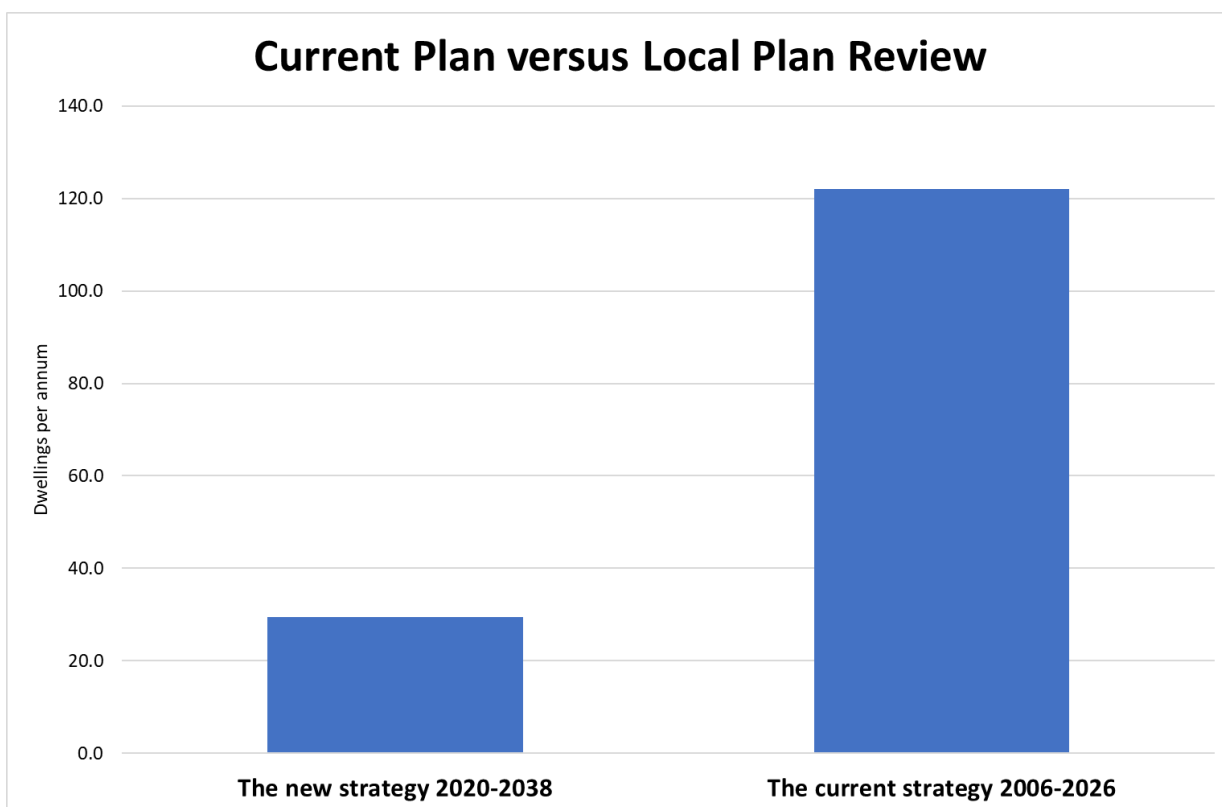


Figure 5. Wiltshire Core Strategy growth compared with Wiltshire Local Plan Review growth at Amesbury

- 34. The housing growth already planned for Amesbury will continue to support the vitality and viability of the town centre, increasing the available pool of local spending. The development of the large King’s Gate and earlier Archer’s Gate

⁴Wiltshire Local Plan Review Revised Spatial Strategy (Wiltshire Council, September 2023)

sites has led to the development of additional infrastructure and services to support the expanded community.

35. There are modest indicative needs⁵ (0.7-1.8ha office floorspace and 4.6ha industrial floorspace) identified for additional employment land over the Local Plan period at Amesbury. The spatial strategy does not make provision for additional land at the town due to constraints. However, it is recognised that employment land can be provided for elsewhere in the settlements A303 Functional Economic Market Area in line with the Employment Land Review. Evidence⁶ suggests there will not be strong demand to develop additional retail floorspace. Opportunities for investment in the town centre may need to be driven by other sectors.

3. Local Plan Proposals

Protecting the environment

36. Amesbury is constrained in environmental terms, in particular due to its location within an ancient landscape, its archaeological potential and its relationship with the nearby Stonehenge World Heritage Site. It is also constrained by the presence of the A303 to the north, which serves as a physical barrier and potential source of noise and air pollution to land within its vicinity; and constrained by a range of Ministry of Defence safeguarding zones around the Boscombe Down aerodrome. The Local Plan recognises these constraints, and the strategy for Amesbury has been shaped to reflect them.
37. The World Heritage Site is a designated heritage asset of the highest international and national significance. The requirement to protect, conserve, present and transmit the site to future generations because of its exceptional qualities, is an obligation that must be given precedence in decisions concerning planning for land in and around the World Heritage Site. The settlement of Amesbury falls close to Stonehenge, and it therefore follows that potential impacts on the setting of the World Heritage Site must be a key consideration when planning for the town.
38. Archaeological potential is very high in the Amesbury area with finds of international significance having been discovered in the town's vicinity. The 'Amesbury Archer' burial was discovered in 2002 during an archaeological

⁵ Wiltshire Employment Land Review (Hardisty Jones Associates, 2023)

⁶ Wiltshire Retail and Town Centres Study (Avison Young, 2020)

excavation at the Archer's Gate development site. Many significant artefacts were found with the early Bronze Age skeletal remains alongside copper knives, arrowheads, wrist guards and a gold hair ornament. The significance of the finds was not fully understood until the excavation, highlighting the undiscovered archaeological potential of land around Amesbury.

39. Significant areas of land around Amesbury and High Post have been promoted by landowners for consideration as part of preparing the Local Plan. Assessment of sites promoted, however, has confirmed that much of the land around Amesbury is subject to the significant constraints highlighted above, that are judged to render most of the sites promoted inappropriate for further consideration.

How many more homes?

40. From the reduced scale of growth over the Local Plan period (530 homes) can be deducted homes already built and those already in the pipeline. What is left and necessary to plan for is called the residual requirement. When the number of homes built and in the pipeline is deducted it leaves a further 120 homes to be accommodated at Amesbury up until 2038.
41. At constrained settlements, such as Amesbury, a contribution of homes from small sites is factored in to help minimise the level of greenfield land allocated and ensure it is only allocated where it is essential to do so⁷. The level for Amesbury is 75 homes.

⁷ Wiltshire Local Plan Housing Delivery Paper, September 2023

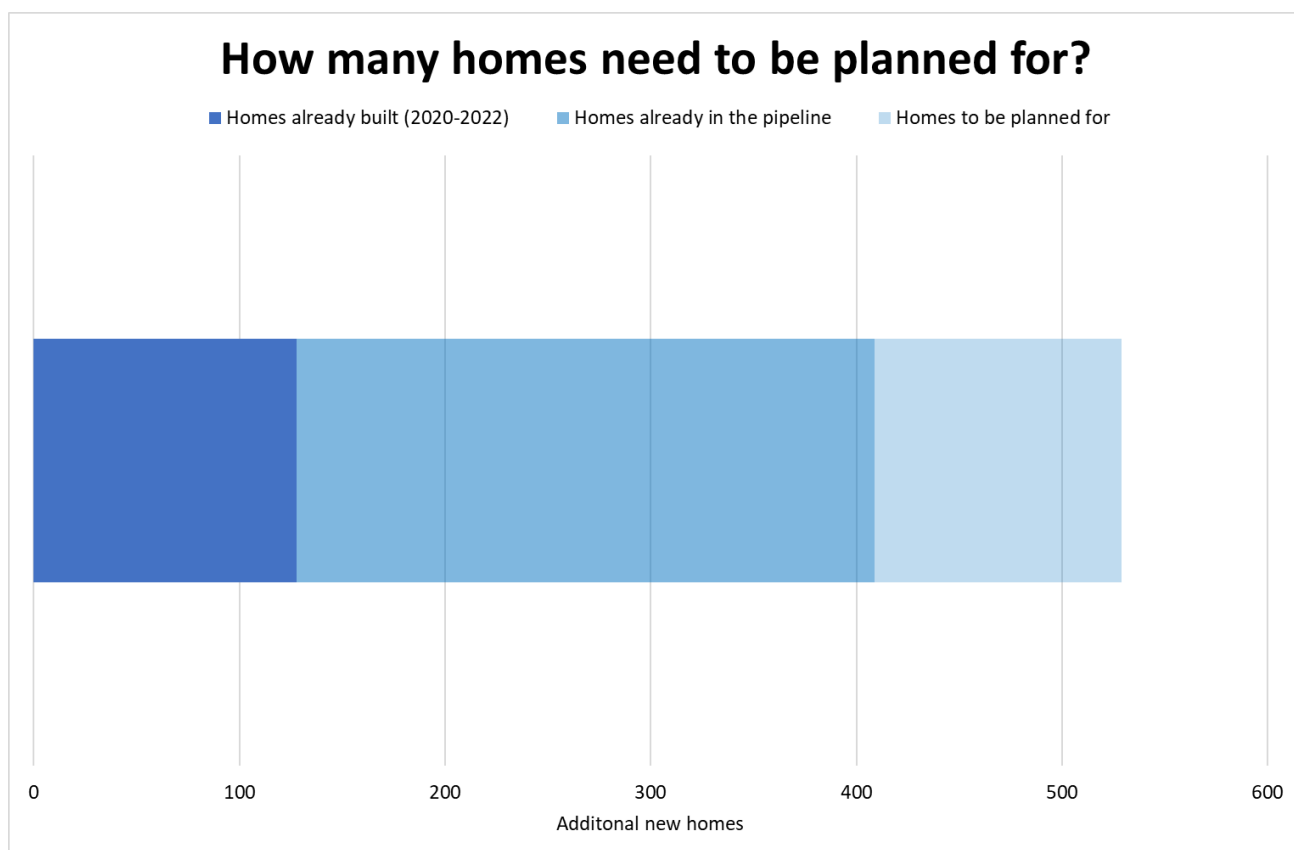


Figure 6. Calculating how many homes need to be planned for at Amesbury

42. Some of the homes planned for by the Wiltshire Core Strategy have been constructed since the Local Plan start date of 2020 or have yet to be constructed within the Local Plan period. A proportion of the residual requirement is expected to be delivered as small site developments (windfall), and also as allocations within an emerging neighbourhood plan for Amesbury. This means there is no outstanding requirement to allocate land for housing within the Local Plan. However, available sites have been assessed.

How much employment land?

43. No sites are allocated for employment land over the Local Plan period, reflecting that there are no available sites which could accommodate the indicative level of needs.
44. The importance of Boscombe Down and the potential for future investment in the site is recognised within the Local Plan. In the wider Amesbury area, the Local Plan also continues to set out policy support for the development of research and development premises for the nationally important biosciences sector at Porton Down; and employment uses at High Post continue to be supported.

Selecting sites

45. While there is no residual strategic requirement to be met at Amesbury over the Local Plan period. Available sites have been tested to consider their potential, including the ability to delivery additional employment land at Amesbury and as an extension to the existing Principal Employment Area at High Post.⁸ The supporting Site Selection Methodology⁹ sets out the process that was undertaken to consider sites. Appendix 2 outlines the detailed outcomes from this process for Amesbury and is briefly summarised below.
46. The starting point for assessing sites is Wiltshire Council's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment¹⁰ (SHELAA), which is a register of land promoted for development by landowners and prospective developers. Only sites that were not spatially separated from the built-up edge were considered with the exception of High Post as discussed above. Stage 1 of the site selection process carried out an initial review to remove sites from further consideration that were known to be unavailable or unsuitable, for example by being already built out or being entirely within an overriding constrained area, such as a flood zone. The assessment of sites at Stage 1 is listed in Table 5 within Appendix 2 setting out the reasons why sites were removed at this this stage. Ten sites were removed from further consideration through Stage 1.
47. Stage 2 involved a high-level assessment of the suitability of each remaining site, based on a range of criteria, including potential for landscape impacts, heritage impacts and accessibility. Sites were excluded from further consideration at Stage 2 where it was judged likely that there would be significant likelihood of harm resulting from development of a site. No sites were excluded from further consideration through Stage 2, the details of which are set out in Table 7 within Appendix 2.
48. There were four sites which were considered to be suitable for further consideration and assessed as 'reasonable alternatives' for development to be assessed through Stage 3 of the site assessment – the sustainability appraisal.

⁸ A new community at High Post was also considered in testing further Alternative Development Strategies for the Salisbury Housing Market Area (Wiltshire Local Plan Review Revised Spatial Strategy (Wiltshire Council, September 2023))

⁹ Wiltshire Local Plan Site Selection Methodology, September 2023

¹⁰ Information about the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment can be found on the Council's website, available at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-monitoring-evidence>.

Planning For Amesbury

(See Figures 7 and 8 below). Three of these sites were at Amesbury and one was at High Post.

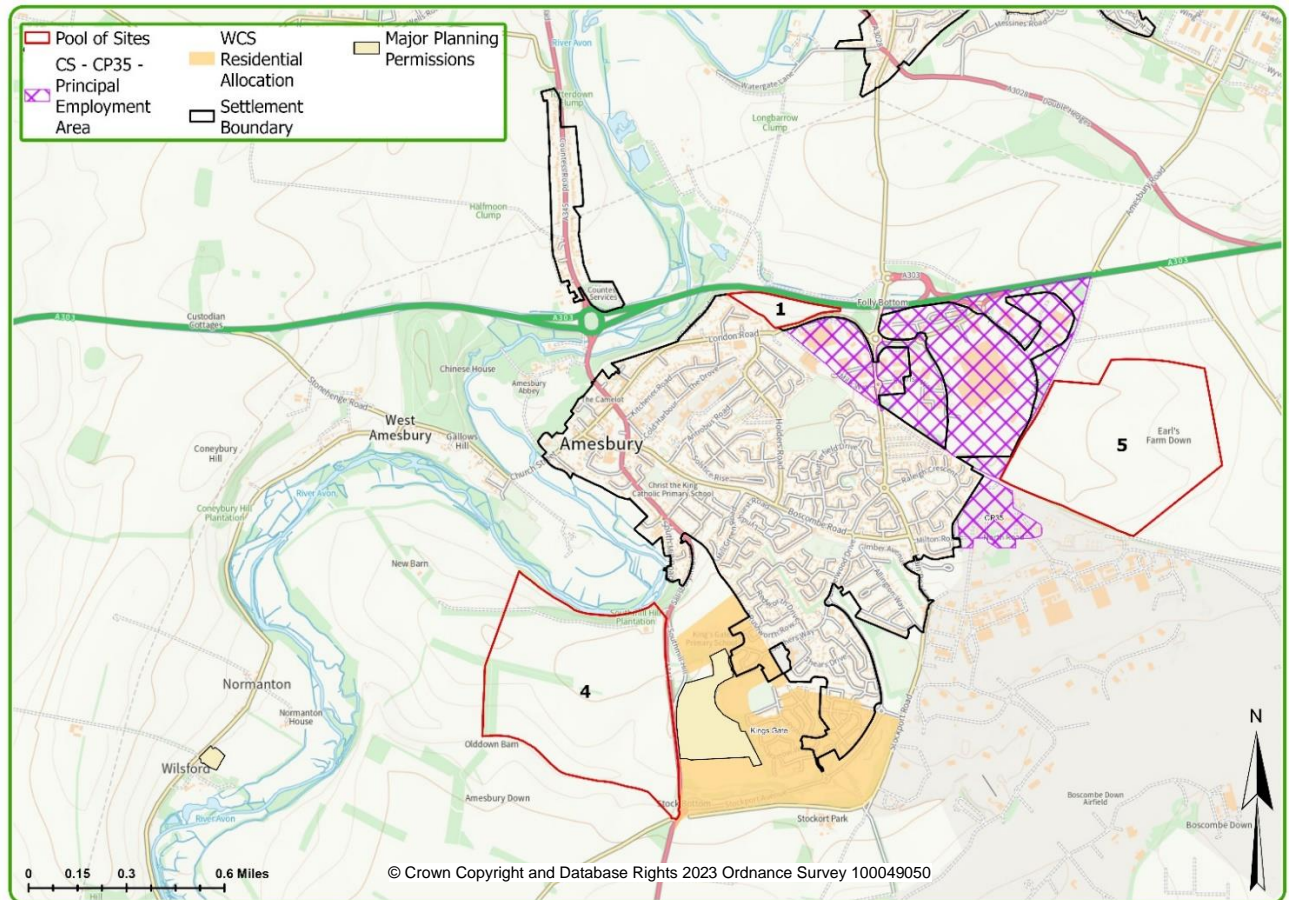


Figure 7. Pool of sites assessed through sustainability appraisal at Amesbury

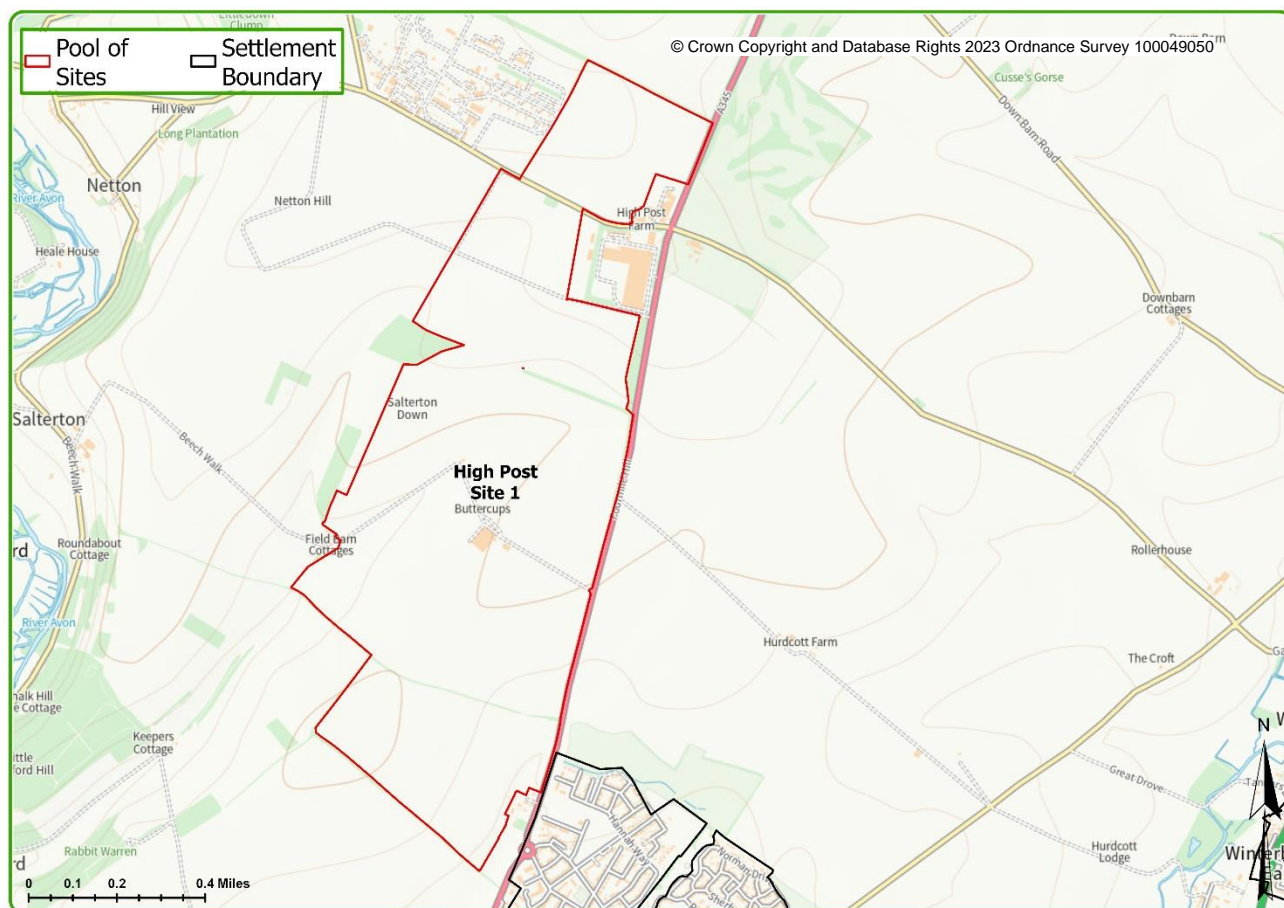


Figure 8. Pool of sites assessed through sustainability appraisal at High Post

49. The sustainability appraisal process assessed what likely significant effects development of a site would incur, both positive and negative. Those sites that performed better in sustainability terms were those that were considered likely to have fewer significant adverse environmental effects and greater social and economic benefits.
50. Sustainability appraisal ranked sites by their social, environmental and economic effects. The outcome from the sustainability appraisal process is shown in Tables 11 and 12 within Appendix 2. The full Sustainability Appraisal Report assessments are contained with a separate report¹¹.
51. Sustainability appraisal showed all the sites at Amesbury were likely to result in significant negative environmental effects. They are all greenfield sites in edge of settlement locations, none of which have been deemed appropriate for development. With all sites at Amesbury excluded from further consideration at

¹¹ Wiltshire Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Report (Wiltshire Council, September 2023)

Stage 3, it was not necessary to take any sites for further consideration at Stage 4 of the site selection process.

52. A summary of the outcomes from the sustainability appraisal for each site can be found in Table 10, Table 11 and Table 12 within Appendix 2.
53. One site was assessed through Stage 4, High Post Site 1: Land at High Post. It was not appropriate to consider the site in the context of Place Shaping Priorities due to the site's isolation from a main settlement, meaning that it could not realistically contribute towards the achievement of these objectives. The site was however subject to further consideration from a strategic context perspective through Stage 4. Based on the outcomes of assessment through the Stage 3 sustainability appraisal, it was clear that the site is heavily constrained by its position within an exposed landscape which serves as a setting to nearby heritage assets. The site is of a significant scale on land that rises from the south towards a high point within the local landscape on the northern part of the site. The open, rolling landscape setting and the Old Sarum scheduled monument have potential to be adversely impacted by significant growth on this site. As such, the outcomes from the sustainability appraisal make clear that the site has a very low likelihood of achieving satisfactory mitigation of heritage and landscape constraints to deliver a strategic scale of development. Smaller, more modest scales of development, including land close to the designated Principal Employment Area, were also discounted due to potential heritage and landscape impacts, and due to the inability of a smaller scale of development to support sustainable development in an isolated setting.
54. The outcome of the site selection process demonstrates that opportunities for expansion of Amesbury and development at High Post is limited, particularly by the need to preserve the settings of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, the Old Sarum hillfort scheduled monument, and the archaeological importance of much of Amesbury's surrounding area. The existing allocation at Kings Gate continues to provide a source of housing supply at Amesbury within the early part of the Local Plan period. Therefore, no new housing allocations are proposed.
55. Opportunities for further economic development at Amesbury continue to be apparent at the town and its surrounding area and will continue to be supported as existing through the Local Plan. The possibility of expansion of Solstice Park employment site is also heavily constrained by high potential for archaeology. There may be opportunities for intensification of economic activities within the Boscombe Down airfield site, which the Local Plan recognises, to complement the Ministry of Defence activities on site. Continued development of land identified at

Porton Down continue to be supported. Opportunities for employment expansion at High Post business park are potentially constrained by landscape and heritage factors.

56. Amesbury is a significantly constrained settlement, and scales of growth through the Local Plan are therefore reduced from previous rates. Beyond existing provision for new homes, and the existing stock of employment land, additional allocations are very difficult to identify. It is likely that strategic future housing and employment will need to rely on the possibility of a new community to help meet needs in the longer term.
57. The methodology and detailed assessments made in the site selection process are all explained in Appendix 2. The sustainability appraisal process and its results are contained in a separate report.¹²

What development is proposed?

58. No sites have been identified for development at Amesbury or High Post over the Local Plan period. The available sites identified at Amesbury and High Post were found to be subject to insurmountable negative impacts making them unsuitable for allocation.
59. A neighbourhood plan is being prepared for Amesbury. Neighbourhood planning lends itself to identifying small to medium sized sites for housing and other forms of development. Non-strategic sites in the neighbourhood plan have the potential to supplement the proposals of the Local Plan Review and deliver a small quantum of housing alongside employment land.
60. The Local Plan Review, however, proposes the central, strategic, development proposals. They are explained below.

Boscombe Down

61. Boscombe Down is a strategically important employment site for south Wiltshire and has the potential for further inward investment/regeneration to expand its role. The nature of potential future uses is currently unclear, but the strategic policy supports opportunities for regeneration as and when they should arise over the coming years, beyond 2026 when the current lease with Qinetiq comes to an end. This enables opportunities for reciprocal business relationships with defence uses while preserving the military operational uses at its core. Land

¹² Wiltshire Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Report (Wiltshire Council, September 2023)

within the site has been previously identified redevelopment and this remains a possibility (up to 12ha). This land parcel should be considered for future as part of a comprehensive master planning approach to the site.

62. The following policy will apply:

Boscombe Down Airfield has the potential for inward investment to expand its role that will involve redevelopment, re-use of buildings, and land in the north of the airfield close to Amesbury. Development within and around the airfield should:

- preserve the use of Boscombe airfield and its runways for operational military uses;
- support a complementary range of defence and aerospace related business.

Porton Down

Use	Scale/Area
Specialist research and development	10 ha

63. Porton Down is an internationally important centre for scientific research and development. It is strategically important site for a growing scientific research capacity in the UK and is located close to Salisbury and Amesbury. The main occupiers at Porton Down are Dstl, UKHSA and Porton Science Park.
64. The site is highly valued for its contribution to nationally important research and development and its role within the UK and South Wiltshire’s economy. The expansion of Porton Down through the further development of the Porton Down Science Park is ongoing, led by the Porton Down Masterplan SPD (2007) which sets a progressive and facilitating framework of development principles designed to promote the delivery of a biosciences-led business incubation facility. Roughly half of the 10ha site has been completed and the remainder of the site is expected to be delivered within the Local Plan period.
65. The Porton Down Masterplan is a whole site framework which aims to ensure all future occupiers can meet their business needs with minimum regulatory intervention. However, it is now some years old, and would benefit from review to ensure that the remainder of the site and the evolving plans and needs of the occupiers can be met in a manner which is fit for the future, particularly to meet the needs of bioscience research in a post-pandemic world. As part of a review of the masterplanned approach consideration should be given to frontloading and

simplifying the routes to delivery, while at the same time safeguarding the high environmental setting within which the site is set.

66. Porton Down is situated close to an internationally designated Special Protection Area (SPA), principally designated for its large population of the rare stone curlew. The site is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for its chalk grassland habitat and population of butterflies; and designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The council have, and will continue to, work closely with the Porton Down scientific community, Natural England and appropriate conservation bodies to avoid potentially adverse effects of known future business development upon Natura 2000 designations.

67. The following policy will apply:

The council will continue to strongly support and promote the principle of the continued development of the Porton Science Park for research and development purposes, to be delivered in accordance with the Porton Down Masterplan, or a subsequent iteration of the masterplan. The council will continue to work with the principal site stakeholders to enable the continued evolution of the site to secure the long-term future of Porton Down as an internationally important site for Health and Life Sciences, and Defence and Security Technologies.

Principal Employment Area: Solstice Park

68. Solstice Park Principal Employment Area is situated to the northeast of Amesbury, benefitting from excellent connectivity to the A303. The site is a large modern employment site catering for a range of occupiers including Home Bargains, TJ Morris and Travis Perkins. The site enjoys good levels of occupancy, but there is no scope for intensification within the site. The site continues to be designated as a Principal Employment Area within the Local Plan.

Principal Employment Area: London Road

69. London Road Principal Employment Area, also known as Minton Distribution Park/Amesbury Distribution Park, is situated to the northeast of Amesbury adjoining Solstice Park and also benefitting from excellent connectivity to the A303. The site has a mix of modern and older units including a variety of users including trade counters, garages, serviced offices, a recycling centre and storage units. The site enjoys good levels of occupancy, but there is no scope for intensification within the site. The site continues to be designated as a Principal Employment Area within the Local Plan.

Principal Employment Area: High Post

70. High Post Principal Employment Area is situated on the A345 roughly equidistant between Amesbury and Salisbury. The site comprises industrial and warehouse buildings, along with a petrol filling station and hotel. The site is reasonably well occupied. The surrounding land is open and agricultural. There may be potential for future modest extension to the site should needs arise, through an extension to the Principal Employment Area, albeit the land is potentially constrained by landscape and heritage factors. The site continues to be designated as a Principal Employment Area within the Local Plan.

Supporting the town centre

71. The Local Plan contains a framework that describes how all the different uses found in the central area function together. It provides context and certainty to businesses and services. It indicates how the area will operate over the Local Plan period.
72. Policy 68 (Managing Town Centres) and Appendix 5 of the Local Plan Review defines a hierarchy of town centres and the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas. The role of each centre correlates to the role of the wider settlement within the settlement hierarchy. The town centre hierarchy defines Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas within Principal Settlement, Market Towns and Local Service Centres. Within this hierarchy, Principal Settlements provide strategic centres; Market Towns are large shopping and service focused centres with smaller catchments; and Local Service Centres provide a range of shops and services for the local population, thus serving a village centre function.
73. The Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Area Boundaries were identified in the 2015 Retail Review. The 2020 Wiltshire Retail and Town Study reviewed these boundaries and found them to be up to date.
74. Amesbury is defined as a Market Town in the town centre hierarchy. The town centre boundary and primary shopping area can be found on the Policies Map. The Local Plan aim is to strengthen the town centre.
75. Amesbury has a relatively small town centre which is arranged around High Street, Salisbury Street, the western part of Earls Court Road, Smithfield Street, The Centre, and part of Salisbury Road. The character of town centre uses is predominantly smaller retail, commercial and hospitality units, mainly falling

within Amesbury's historic core and Conservation Area. Larger units, including a supermarket, are located in the southern part of the town centre, outside of the Conservation Area. Many of the town's larger commercial units are located at Solstice Park, to the east of Amesbury. The town centre faces a degree of competition from the larger city centre of Salisbury, located some 8 miles south. The result of this is that Amesbury has a strong service led role in serving the local community.

76. The Retail and Town Centres Study 2020 indicates some capacity for new convenience retail and limited capacity for additional comparison goods retail floor space. The convenience floorspace capacity suggests that an additional medium sized food store could be supported at the town, however the Study overall finds that there is sufficient floorspace to meet these retail needs in Amesbury. This reflects good retention of convenience retail stores and as such, maintaining the current offer should be a focus for the Local Plan period. There could be potential to grow the food and beverage market over the Local Plan period.
77. Opportunities for Amesbury town centre to grow are limited due to the physical limitations of land availability, and the historic character of much of the area. However, opportunities to improve the town centre offer exist through sensitive and well-planned redevelopment of existing units. Over the Local Plan period, it is anticipated that the land use make-up of the town centre may evolve, reflecting changes to the national legislative and policy frameworks. The public health implications of new hot-food takeaways will be a key consideration for proposals of this nature and new clusters of these land uses should be avoided within Amesbury Town Centre.
78. Through careful planning, the quality of the public realm is to be improved to improve legibility and to support and encourage tourism development to capitalise on the town's proximity to Stonehenge.

4. How will growth be delivered?

79. Landowners, business and housebuilders are the main drivers of development over the Local Plan period. Service providers may also come forward with proposals to invest in new facilities that support growth in new homes and local business. Wiltshire Council as local planning authority determines planning applications in accordance with the Local Plan. It also determines them in accordance with policies of a neighbourhood plan that serves to guide the shape and form of non-strategic aspects of development, such as developing locally distinctive policies on design.

Role of neighbourhood planning

80. The Local Plan sets the overarching context for neighbourhood planning in Wiltshire. Strategic policies of the Local Plan are high level and limited to those necessary to address strategic priorities in Wiltshire. At a local level, communities can play an important role in shaping their areas by producing neighbourhood plans which direct where new development should take place, and how it should look. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies set by the Local Plan but can add further locally specific requirements that reflect the wishes of the local community.
81. The Local Plan sets out a series of Place Shaping Priorities for Amesbury that have been devised in consultation with Amesbury Town Council. The Place Shaping Priorities set a range of outcomes for the town over the lifetime of the Local Plan to 2038. The Place Shaping Priorities also provide a context that can influence the direction of neighbourhood plans.
82. In order to assist in the production of neighbourhood plans, Wiltshire Council is also required to provide a scale of housing to plan for, for each one. Sites allocated through neighbourhood plans contribute towards meeting the overall of scale of growth set by the Local Plan, as well as meeting local needs identified through the evidence gathering process for the neighbourhood plan. An element of the Local Plan strategy is therefore to be delivered by neighbourhood plans.
83. To set an appropriate scale of growth to be planned for through neighbourhood plans at the main settlements (Principal Settlements and Market Towns), a range of factors have been considered:
 - Neighbourhood planning lends itself to identifying small to medium sized sites for housing development; and national planning policy sets a target of 10% of overall requirements to be met on sites no larger than a hectare¹³.
 - The stage a neighbourhood plan has reached in its preparation, the community's appetite to plan for new homes and its focus all affect the degree to which neighbourhood planning can contribute. The neighbourhood plan can help to meet housing needs in a form that matches local needs.
 - The nature and extent of the area designation and what scope there is to identify sites for housing development may be limited, for example, if

¹³ National Planning Policy Framework (2021), Paragraph 69, MHCLG

boundaries are drawn tight to the built-up area and most opportunities will be windfall and difficult to identify.

84. The Amesbury Neighbourhood Area was formally designated in August 2021, and Amesbury Town Council are in early evidence gathering stages of preparing a neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood area designation is for the parish area of Amesbury including Amesbury town and its environs. The neighbourhood area designation provides scope within and on the edge of the urban area to allocate suitable sites.
85. While there is no strategic scale of housing growth to be delivered at Amesbury over the Local Plan period, there are likely to be opportunities for the neighbourhood planning process to identify small to medium scale sites to deliver a modest level of growth over the Local Plan period. This could include brownfield sites or land within the built edges of the settlement where potential impacts on the historic environment are likely to be reduced.
86. There are no other Local Service Centres or Large Villages within the Amesbury neighbourhood area (parish boundary) that have their own separate indicative rural housing requirements¹⁴. Ten per cent of the scale of growth identified at Amesbury suggests a neighbourhood area requirement for Amesbury of approximately 50 dwellings.
87. The neighbourhood area requirement should be considered in combination with other evidence of local needs as determined by the neighbourhood planning group. The neighbourhood area requirement is for the Local Plan period up to 2038, and therefore may be delivered over one or more iterations of a neighbourhood plan within this period.

Amesbury neighbourhood area requirement (2020 to 2038)	50
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Local infrastructure

88. Any additional growth at Amesbury brought forward through the neighbourhood planning process would need to be supported by the correct infrastructure, services and facilities. When planning for growth, it is important to consider the characteristics of the town in terms of key services and infrastructure (e.g. green

¹⁴ Neighbourhood area requirements for the rural parishes are calculated separately, as set out within the Rural Housing Requirements Methodology paper.

infrastructure, transport and utilities), as well as the local economy. The following summarises the measures required to be put in place to address employment growth proposals for Amesbury as well as known infrastructure issues, what additional provision is necessary to support growth and what other opportunities there may be.

Sustainable transport and active travel

89. Amesbury is well served by the A303 which provides strategic links south-east and south-west England. The A345 is also an important secondary A road that links Salisbury to Marlborough, via Amesbury. The A345 is well served by regular bus services along this route.
90. There are issues related to congestion in the town centre and known pressures on key junctions linked to the wider transport network, for which improvement will be sought wherever possible. There are also Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Salisbury, which Amesbury traffic feeds into. Opportunities to address local air quality concerns will also be sought.
91. Highway connectivity, reducing the need to travel and making it easier for people to use sustainable modes of transport are essential in supporting the scale of growth at the town, as reflected in the Place Shaping Priorities. These seek improvements to the local transport network that reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality in the town centre and promote sustainable transport and active travel, such as infrastructure to support pedestrian and cycling routes from the new employment sites. Relevant future development proposals will be expected to contribute towards improving highways and air quality conditions.
92. Key improvements that contribute to the overall ambition for Amesbury:
 - Urban walking and cycling routes – a safe connected network to and from the proposed employment allocations.
 - Traffic management and re- routing to ensure vehicle movements are focused on the most appropriate routes.
 - Investment in electric vehicle infrastructure.
 - Active travel promotional campaigns.

Utilities

93. Electricity infrastructure is constrained across much of Wiltshire. The Grid Supply Points in Wiltshire, located in Minety, Melksham and Mannington are all constrained. At the Bulk Supply Point (BSP) north of Amesbury reinforcements are expected to be completed in late 2026.

94. With the uptake of low carbon technology and the move towards net zero, there are estimates that energy demand could almost treble by 2050. This increased pressure on the system is something Scottish and Southern Electricity Network (SSEN), as Distribution Systems Operator, is working on to manage new capacity. Solutions may include flexible connections, renewable energy, and further investment to reinforce the current infrastructure.
95. Information from SSEN indicates the Boscombe substation to the southwest of the town is also constrained. This means new generators may require investment in the infrastructure to be able to connect to the grid.
96. Developing sites at Amesbury may require upgrades to water infrastructure connecting the local water recycling centre.
97. The approach to securing infrastructure provision from new development is set out within Local Plan Policy 5 (Securing Infrastructure Provision from New Development), with site specific requirements that are applicable to Amesbury set out within Policy 36 (Amesbury Market Town).

Appendix 1 Policy Review

Table 4: Wiltshire Core Strategy policy review for Amesbury policies

Policy	Title	Retain, replace or delete
<i>Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)</i>		
WCS Core Policy 4 Amesbury Community Area	<p>Spatial Strategy: Amesbury Community Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic allocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kings Gate, Amesbury • Principal Employment Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solstice Park; ▪ Boscombe Down; ▪ London Road; ▪ Porton Down; ▪ High Post. 	<p>The policy presents the area strategy for the Amesbury Community Area, setting out how the area is expected to change by 2026, and how this change will be delivered.</p> <p>The policy is replaced by LPR Policy 36: Amesbury Market Town which sets out how development at Amesbury is envisaged to take place over the plan period 2020-2038.</p> <p>The Kings Gate allocation is partly developed and will continue to be delivered into the Local Plan period. It is therefore retained through LPR Policy 36.</p> <p>The following employment sites continue to serve a strategically important purpose and continue to be designated as Principal Employment Areas, retained through LPR Policy 36:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solstice Park; • London Road; • Porton Down; • High Post. <p>Boscombe Down Principal Employment Area is deleted and replaced with LPR Policy 37 Boscombe Down; this policy</p>

		covers the redevelopment of an existing employment site, re-use of buildings, and land in the north of the airfield close to Amesbury.
WCS CP5 Porton Down	Porton Down	<p>The policy supports the principle of the development of a Science Park Campus at Porton Down. The site has been partly delivered, with part of the site left to come forward, which is of strategic importance for the council.</p> <p>The policy is replaced through LPR Policy 38 Porton Down. This policy supports the principle of a Science Campus at Porton Down. This has, in the interim, become a reality, with Phase One complete and Phase Two on the way with further potential.</p>
<i>Salisbury District Local Plan, saved policies</i>		
E8B Land at Boscombe and Porton Down	Land at Boscombe and Porton Down	<p>The policy supports the development of approx. 12ha of land for science-based industry and research uses at Boscombe Down (7ha) and Porton Down (5ha). The Boscombe Down element of the policy is replaced with LPR Policy 37 (Boscombe Down). The Porton Down element of the policy is replaced with LPR Policy 38 (Porton Down).</p>
S1 Primary Shopping Frontages in Salisbury and Amesbury		The policy seeks to manage uses within the Primary Frontages identified at Amesbury and Salisbury to maintain these areas as the retail centres. The saved policy is area specific and is to be

Planning For Amesbury

		replaced by the Wiltshire wide Policy 68 (Managing Town Centres).
S2 Secondary Shopping Areas in Salisbury and Amesbury		The policy seeks to manage uses within the Secondary Frontages identified at Amesbury and Salisbury to maintain these areas for town centre uses. The saved policy is area specific and is to be replaced by the Wiltshire wide Policy 68 (Managing Town Centres).
R8 New Sports and Recreation Provision (Stockport Road, Amesbury)		The policy allocates land for public open space at Amesbury at associated new housing development. The policy is site specific and since the adoption of the former District Plan the site in question has gained planning permission and is substantially built out. The policy is deleted.

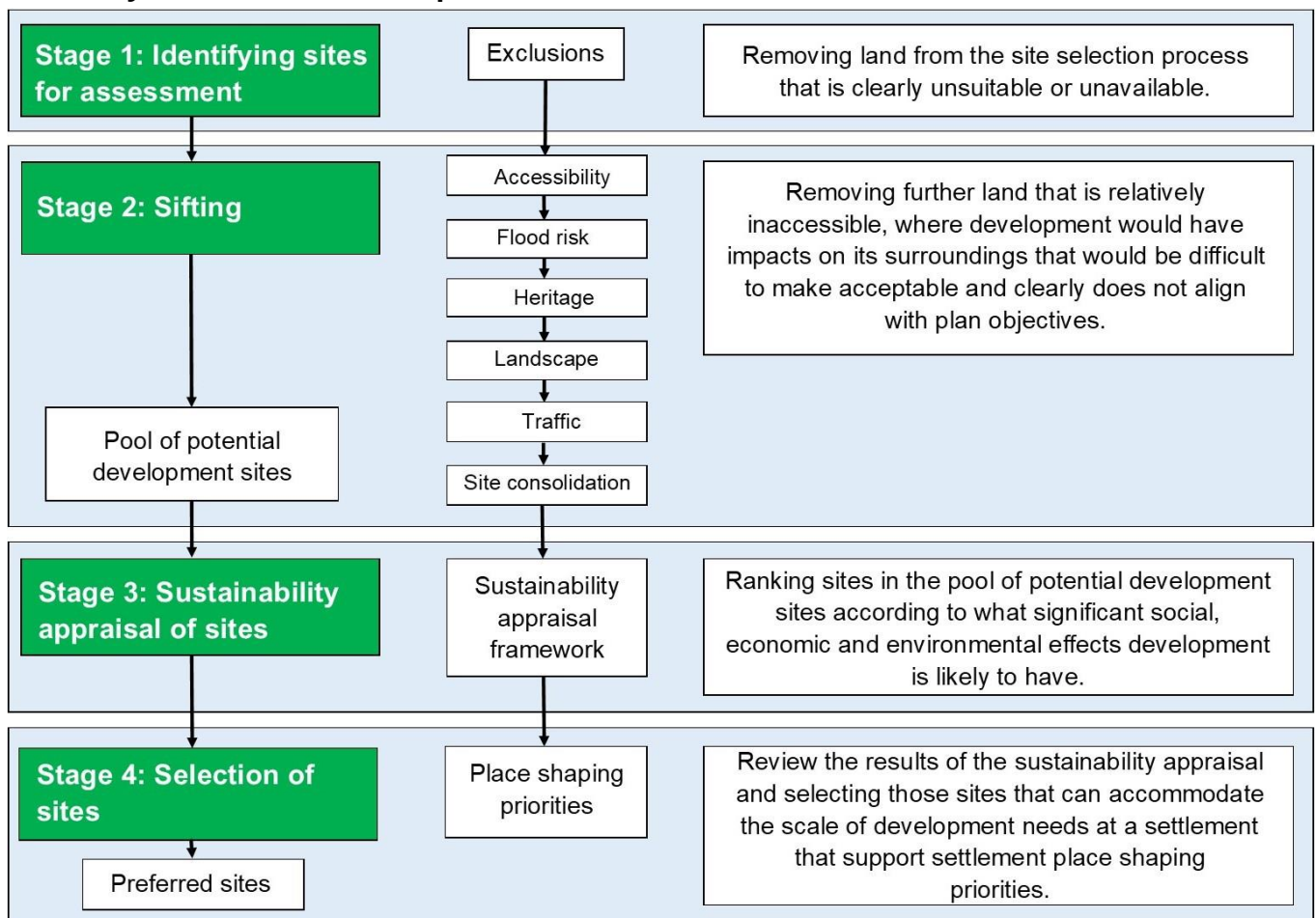
Appendix 2 Site Selection

Site Selection: Amesbury and High Post

A1. The purpose of this appendix is to explain the site selection process at Amesbury and High Post, which takes place over four stages, as illustrated in the flow diagram below. The full methodology can be found in the supporting Site Selection Methodology report¹⁵.

A2. This appendix briefly describes the methodology, and explains the outputs that emerge from Stages 1-4, with the conclusions for Amesbury and High Post set out within the main body of this paper.

Summary of the site selection process



¹⁵ Wiltshire Local Plan Site Selection Methodology, September 2023

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment

- A3. The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment¹⁶ (SHELAA) provides the initial pool of land from which sites may be selected. The SHELAA is a register of land promoted for development by landowners and prospective developers. Parcels of land are submitted to Wiltshire Council for consideration as potential allocations in the Local Plan, as well as Parish and Town Council neighbourhood plans¹⁷. Plan preparation and not the SHELAA determines what land is suitable for development through a process of selecting the most appropriate sites.
- A4. Only sites that were not spatially separated from the built-up edge were considered¹⁸. The maps below show the SHELAA sites that were considered through the site selection process at Amesbury and High Post.

¹⁶ The Wiltshire Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) is available from the council's website. The SHELAA was last formally published in 2017, but new sites submitted to the council since then have also been considered through the site selection process.

¹⁷ Other land, not included in the SHELAA, may possibly be capable of development but because neither a developer nor landowner has promoted the site for development, the site cannot readily be said to be available within the Local Plan period.

¹⁸ An exception to this was the consideration of land at High Post, which while spatially detached was considered for its potential to accommodate a small new community; in the context of a limited pool of available sites in the Salisbury HMA.

Planning For Amesbury

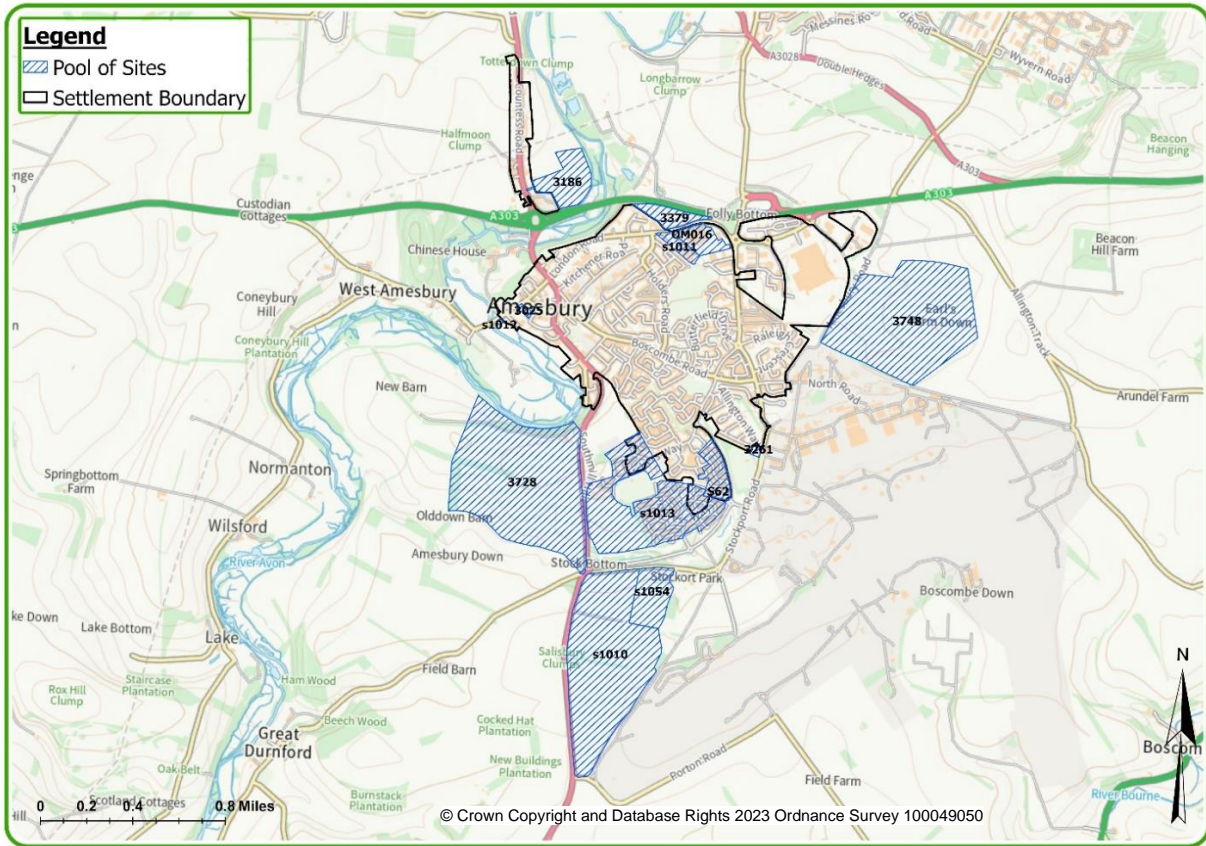


Figure 9. Pool of sites at Amesbury

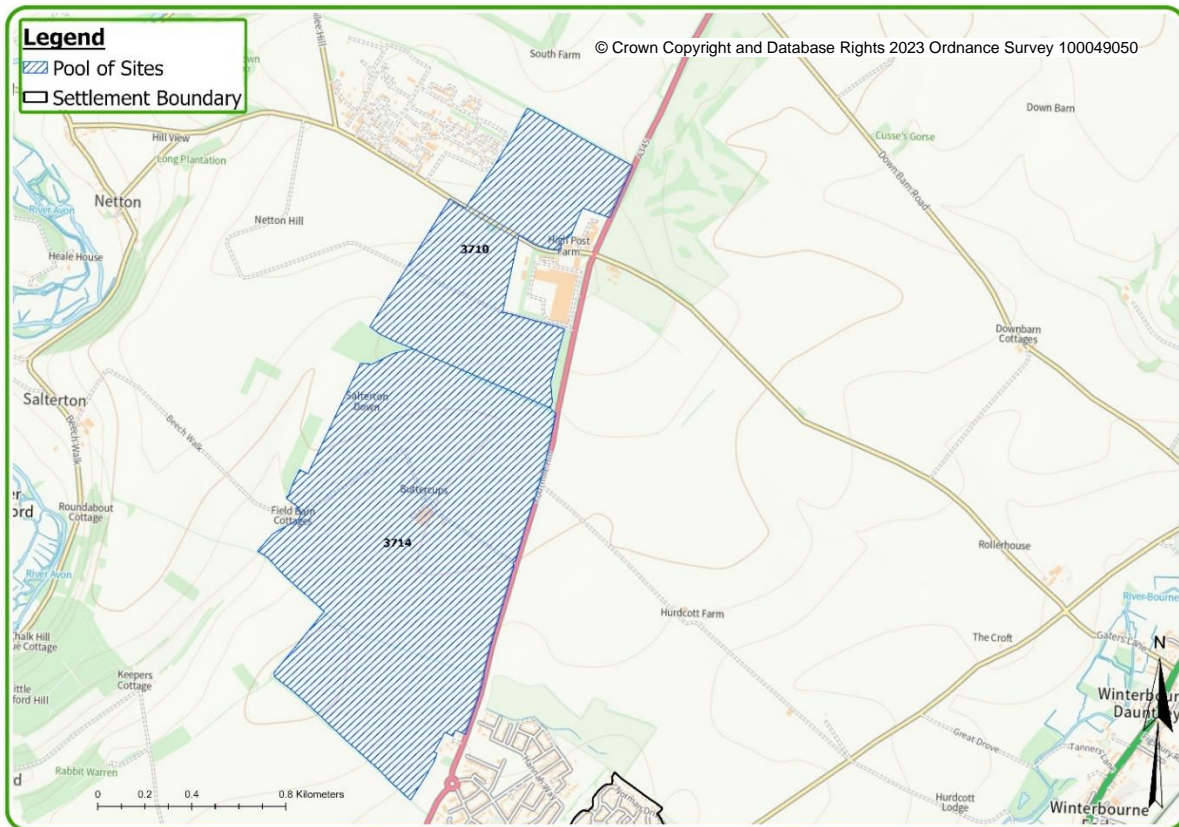


Figure 10. Pool of sites at High Post

A5. The following paragraphs summarise the stages of assessment undertaken through the site selection process.

Stage 1 – Identifying Sites for Assessment

A6. The initial stage excluded SHELAA sites from further consideration that constitute unsuitable land for development if they are unavailable, separated from the built-edge or clearly unsuitable for development for a range of other reasons, as described within the Site Selection Methodology. While sites at High Post do not adjoin the built edge of a main settlement, the sites were considered to have strategic potential that warranted further testing through the site selection process.

A7. Ten sites at Amesbury were excluded at Stage 1.

Table 5: Sites removed at Stage 1 of the site selection process for Amesbury

SHELAA site ref.	Reason for removal at Stage 1
3186	Unavailable. Site earmarked by Highways England as part of strategic transport improvements scheme at the A303 ¹⁹ .
S1054	Unsuitable. Sites almost in their entirety within explosives safeguarding exclusion zone around MoD site.
S1010	
3025	Unsuitable. Below site size threshold.
3261	Unsuitable. Below site size threshold.
S1011	Unavailable. Site built out.
S1012	Unsuitable. Below site size threshold.
S1013	Unavailable. Site built out.
S62	Unavailable. Site built out.
OM016	Unsuitable. Part of a Principal Employment Area.

¹⁹ A303 Stonehenge (Amesbury to Berwick Down). National Highways, available at: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/2hod4d0q/a303-stonehenge-a2bd-web-march-2019-vi.pdf>

Stage 2 – Site Sifting

A8. Using the land that passed through Stage 1, a second assessment stage used a limited set of strategic criteria (proportionate evidence²⁰) to further refine the list of sites to a set of *reasonable alternatives* for further assessment using the sustainability appraisal process. The criteria considered at Stage 2 were related to **Accessibility and Wider Impacts (Stage 2A)**, and **Strategic Context (Stage 2B)**, and can be summarised as follows:

Accessibility and Wider Impacts (Stage 2A)

A9. The merits of each site were assessed to understand strengths and weaknesses in terms of how accessible a site location may be and what wider impacts could result from their development. Evidence used to inform this judgement was based on assessment of travel times to key destinations including town centres, employment areas, schools, and healthcare services. This is further detailed in the Site Selection Methodology.

A10. In addition to accessibility, the following wider impacts were tested through Stage 2:

- **Flood Risk:** Sites were assessed to consider whether a source of flood risk, or combination of flood risks, would likely increase flood risks beyond the site options assessed; and the degree to which this would be likely to be possible to mitigate.
- **Heritage:** A site that was within the setting of a heritage asset, that was likely to lead to substantial harm that could not be mitigated was rejected.
- **Landscape:** A site that was highly likely to lead to visual harm in the wider landscape, that was unlikely to be possible to be mitigated, was rejected.
- **Traffic:** A site that was likely to lead to an unacceptable degree of harm in terms of traffic and congestion impacts, and potential for exacerbation of poor air quality, was rejected.

A11. The outcomes from the Stage 2A assessment were categorised as: high risk of harm (red), medium risk of harm (amber) and low risk of harm (green). Sites with one or more red rating were likely to be rejected at Stage 2.

²⁰ To meet national requirements, plans must be sound, justified by having an appropriate strategy, considering reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence.

Strategic Context (Stage 2B)

A12. This part of the Stage 2 assessment considered the pool of sites in relation to the strategic context of the settlement, having regard to:

- Long-term patterns of development
- Significant environmental factors
- Scale of growth and strategic priorities
- Future growth possibilities for the urban area

A13. In some cases, this part of the assessment influenced the judgement on what pool of possible sites constitute a set of reasonable alternatives for further consideration. This did not pre-judge more detailed testing through the sustainability appraisal process but enabled sites that were clearly at odds with the strategic context for the settlement to be ruled out.

Table 6: Strategic context analysis of Amesbury

Context criteria	Detail
Long-term pattern of development	<p>The historic core of the town developed around the water meadows associated with the River Avon which runs to the north and west of the settlement. Over time the town has grown southwards and round Boscombe Down airfield. In recent years substantial residential development has taken place to the south, at Archers Gate and Kings Gate.</p> <p>The town, and surrounding area, benefits from several Principal Employment Areas, including Boscombe Down; London Road; Porton Down; High Post and Solstice Park.</p>
Significant environmental factors	<p>The River Avon is a significant constraint restricting growth to the north and west of the town. Consequently, there are areas of flood risk along the course of the river.</p> <p>The area has rich historic value. Stonehenge World Heritage Site extends to the north and west of the settlement, and the area has high levels of significant archaeology associated with its position within the Stonehenge landscape. Amesbury Abbey Historic Park and Gardens fringes the northwest of the town.</p> <p>The A303 (part of the Strategic Transport Network) runs to the north of the town dissecting the main bulk of the settlement from a section of linear development along the A345 to the northwest of the town close to where the A303 and A345 intersect. The A345 continues southward to the west of Amesbury, towards Salisbury.</p> <p>The A303 and A345 to some degree act as a barrier to connectivity of land from the central part of the town.</p>

Scale of growth and strategic priorities	<p>The scale of growth planned for Amesbury is modest, with an expectation that the majority of growth within the Local Plan period will be from land already allocated by the Kings Gate development which is under construction.</p> <p>Strategic priorities include promoting Amesbury as a self-sufficient town encouraging local employment opportunities and encouraging tourism linkages between the town and nearby Stonehenge. Developing the town centre to improve the public realm, to encourage tourism and spending is also a priority.</p> <p>Improvements to infrastructure and transport, particularly in relation to the A303 and A345 (both of which currently experience congestion), and improving linkages to and from the town are also important priorities. Some of these are priorities which could also be considered through the emerging neighbourhood plan</p>
Future growth possibilities for the urban area	<p>Amesbury is constrained in environmental terms, in particular due to its location within an ancient landscape, its archaeological potential and its relationship with the nearby Stonehenge World Heritage Site. It is also constrained by the presence of the A303 to the north, which serves as a physical barrier and potential source of noise and air pollution to land within its vicinity; and constrained by a range of Ministry of Defence safeguarding zones around the Boscombe Down aerodrome. The Local Plan recognises these constraints, and the strategy for Amesbury has been shaped to reflect them; with a relatively low number of homes to be planned for.</p>

A14. A table comprising the Stage 2A RAG ratings and a concluding commentary formed part of an overall judgement for Stages 2A and 2B combined. The overall judgement on each site could refer to the conclusions reached in the strategic narrative where this affected a decision to reject or take forward land.

Table 7: Stage 2 site assessment conclusions

SHELAA Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B – Strategic context and overall judgement	Taken Forward
3379	Land north of London Road						<p>The site is adjacent to settlement boundary and has good prospects in terms of accessibility. Flood risk unlikely to be an issue for this site. Potential for heritage impact, such as on barrow within site boundary. May have potential to impact on Outstanding Universal Value of WHS. Potential to increase traffic.</p> <p>The site is of a strategic scale and is taken forward for further assessment.</p>	✓
3728	South West Amesbury / Viney’s Farm						<p>The site is separate from the built edge and not adjacent to the settlement boundary. It is, however, adjacent to land and under construction at Kings Gate, east of the A345. Accessibility is severed by the A345 but could be improved.</p>	✓

Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B – Strategic context and overall judgement	Taken Forward
SHELAA								
							<p>Flood risk unlikely to be an issue for this site, saved for small areas of higher groundwater vulnerability.</p> <p>The site is potentially visible in the landscape, including the Stonehenge WHS, which would require further consideration. Any potential for indirect impact on the OUV of WHS would require assessment.</p> <p>Potential to increase traffic.</p> <p>The site is of a strategic scale and is taken forward for further assessment.</p>	
3748	Land at Earl's Farm Down						<p>The site adjoins the settlement edge but is severed from assimilation into the town by Solstice Park and Boscombe Down. The site has been submitted by the developer with the intention of bringing the site forward for employment development.</p> <p>Flood risk unlikely to be an issue for this site.</p> <p>The site is potentially visible in the landscape, including the Stonehenge WHS, which would require further consideration. Any potential for indirect impact on the OUV of WHS would require assessment.</p> <p>Potential to increase traffic.</p> <p>The site is of a strategic scale and is taken forward for further assessment.</p>	✓
3710	Land adjacent to High Post Business Park						<p>The site adjoins High Post employment area but is separate from a settlement. It is however considered that accessibility could be improved if a scale of development with supporting infrastructure were to be delivered as part of a strategically significant development.</p> <p>Flood risk unlikely to be an issue for this site.</p> <p>The site is visible in the landscape, with potential impacts in the Stonehenge WHS landscape and Old Sarum scheduled monument, which would require further consideration.</p> <p>Potential to increase traffic.</p> <p>The site is logically related to the adjoining site 3714, and in combination the site is of a strategic scale and is taken forward for further assessment.</p>	✓
3714	Land west of A345 at High Post						<p>The site is close to High Post employment area but is separate from a settlement. It is however considered that accessibility could be improved if a scale of development with supporting</p>	✓

Reference	Site Address	Accessibility	Flood Risk	Heritage	Landscape	Traffic	Stage 2A and Stage 2B – Strategic context and overall judgement	Taken Forward
SHELAA								
							infrastructure were to be delivered as part of a strategically significant development. Flood risk unlikely to be an issue for this site. The site is visible in the landscape, with potential impacts in the Stonehenge WHS landscape and Old Sarum scheduled monument, which would require further consideration. Potential to increase traffic. The site is logically related to the adjoining site 3710, and in combination the site is of a strategic scale and is taken forward for further assessment.	

A15. Of those sites taken forward, it was appropriate in some cases to combine sites for the purpose of assessment, where this created more sensible or logical land parcels for further consideration.

Table 8: SHELAA sites combined for the purpose of further assessment

Sites combined	Reason
3710 and 3714	The sites abut and have no strong physical barriers between them.

A16. In preparation for Stage 3, the remaining sites were renumbered for ease of understanding, as follows:

Table 9: Sites renumbered for the purpose of further assessment

Site Number	Site Name	SHELAA reference
1	Land north London Road	3379
4	South West Amesbury / Viney’s Farm	3728
5	Land at Earl’s Down Farm	3748
High Post 1	Land at High Post	3710 and 3714

Stage 3 – Sustainability Appraisal

A17. At Stage 3, each of the remaining sites in the pool of sites (reasonable alternatives) was examined through a sustainability appraisal process, by assessing the likely significant effects of potential development under a set of twelve objectives covering social, economic and environmental considerations. A

full explanation of the sustainability appraisal methodology is provided in a separate report²¹, which also includes the detailed assessments made for each site within a series of appendices.

- A18. Sustainability appraisal enabled sites to be scored by their respective sustainability benefits and disadvantages. It also identified where it may be possible to mitigate adverse effects, as well as measures which could increase the benefits of development. Stage 3 enabled sites to be ranked in order of most sustainable to least sustainable, based on the sustainability appraisal criteria used.
- A19. Tables 10 and 11 show the sustainability appraisal conclusions for the reasonable alternative sites that were assessed. The overall sustainability appraisal score is shown in column 2 of the table.
- A20. The sustainability appraisal process weights all 'objectives' (shown in the top row, below) equally. There are more environmental objectives than social/economic objectives – scores against environmental objectives typically tend to be negative. The overall score resulting from the potential development of greenfield sites generally yield a negative value.
- A21. Table 12 sets out a descriptive summary of the key outcomes from the sustainability appraisal for each of the sites that were assessed.
- A22. Reasonable alternatives are rejected at Stage 3 where the sustainability appraisal concludes that development would result in one or more 'major adverse effect' (highlighted in red with a triple negative in Tables 10 and 11).
- A23. At Amesbury, the sustainability appraisal identified that there were likely major adverse effects arising from the development of all three sites within the pool of sites. Therefore, no sites were taken forward for further consideration at Amesbury.
- A24. At High Post, the sustainability appraisal identified overall likely negative impacts from the sites assessed, although no major adverse impacts were identified. Potential landscape and historic landscape/heritage impacts were however noted areas of concern that would require significant mitigation, such as through a significant reduction in the developable area for the site.

²¹ Wiltshire Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Report (Wiltshire Council, September 2023)

Amesbury and High Post: Tables showing summary of assessment scores listed in order of site sustainability performance (More → Less)

Key to likely significance of effects:					
+++	Major positive effect = +3 points	0	Neutral effect = 0 points	---	Major adverse effect = -3 points (mitigation unachievable - recommend that is not considered further)
++	Moderate positive effect = +2 points			--	Moderate adverse effect = -2 points (mitigation achievable but problematic)
+	Minor positive effect = +1 point			-	Minor adverse effect = -1 point (mitigation easily achievable)

Table 10: Sustainability appraisal scores for sites assessed at Amesbury

SITE	Overall site score (sustainability rank)	SA obj 1 (Biodiversity) overall score	SA obj 2 (Land + soil) overall score	SA obj 3 (Water) overall score	SA obj 4 (Air/poll'n) overall score	SA obj 5 (Climate) overall score	SA obj 6 (Energy) overall score	SA obj 7 (Heritage) overall score	SA obj 8 (Landscape) overall score	SA obj 9 (Housing) overall score	SA obj 10 (Inc comms) overall score	SA obj 11 (Transport) overall score	SA obj 12 (Economic) overall score
Site 1	-9 (2 nd)	-	-	--	---	-	0	--	-	+	+	-	+
Site 5	-10 (3 rd)	--	--	--	--	-	0	---	--	+++	+	--	++
Site 4	-10 (3 rd)	--	--	--	--	-	0	---	--	+++	+	--	++

Table 11: Sustainability appraisal scores for sites assessed at High Post

SITE	Overall site score (+ position)	SA obj 1 (Biodiversity) overall score	SA obj 2 (Land + soil) overall score	SA obj 3 (Water) overall score	SA obj 4 (Air/poll'n) overall score	SA obj 5 (Climate) overall score	SA obj 6 (Energy) overall score	SA obj 7 (Heritage) overall score	SA obj 8 (Landscape) overall score	SA obj 9 (Housing) overall score	SA obj 10 (Inc comms) overall score	SA obj 11 (Transport) overall score	SA obj 12 (Economic) overall score
HP Site 1	-6 (1 st)	--	--	--	--	-	0	--	--	+++	+++	--	+++

Table 12: Sustainability appraisal key issues for sites assessed at Amesbury and High Post

Site	Overall SA score and ranking of sites	Likely key issues for each site
High Post Site 1	-6 (1 st)	<p>High Post Site 1 (Land at High Post) is spatially separate from Amesbury, being located on the A345 between Amesbury and the nearby city of Salisbury. The site is of a significant scale on land that rises from the south towards a high point within the local landscape on the northern part of the site. The open, rolling landscape setting and the Old Sarum hillfort scheduled monument have potential to be impacted by significant growth on this site. A reduced, more moderate scale of growth is unlikely to be of a scale which could support a sustainable residential community without heavy reliance on the private car. Land at High Post is a Principal Employment Area which supports a range of locally important economic activities.</p>
1	-9 (2 nd)	<p>Site 1 (Land at London Road) is a sloping, broadly triangular shaped field adjacent to the A303 and London Road, to the east of Countess Roundabout on the northern edge of Amesbury.</p> <p>While a relatively self-contained site, it is nonetheless constrained by several factors, including its proximity to the A303 as a significant source of noise and air pollution. This is coupled with its sloped bowl-like topography which is likely to make mitigation of pollution from the A303 very difficult to achieve. The site also has some potential for onsite archaeological features, which may limit its developability.</p> <p>The site was excluded from consideration due to the very low feasibility of satisfactory mitigation from sources of noise and air pollution.</p>
4	-10 (3 rd)	<p>Site 4 (South West Amesbury / Viney's Farm) lies to the southwest of Amesbury on land to the west of the A345, opposite land currently under development at Kings Gate. The topography of the site is varied, with higher ground situated broadly in the middle of the site.</p> <p>The site is heavily constrained across the entirety of the site by significant archaeological potential and probability for adverse impacts on the historic setting of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site, which renders it inappropriate to consider further for allocation. Parts of the site are close to areas of ecological value, and the site is partially within a safeguarding zone associated with the nearby Boscombe Down site.</p> <p>The site was excluded from consideration due to a low feasible likelihood of satisfactory mitigation of heritage constraints.</p>

5	-10 (3 rd)	<p>Site 5 (East of Solstice Park) is located on the eastern edge of Amesbury, to the south of the A303, to the east of Solstice Park business park and north of Boscombe Down airfield.</p> <p>The site is heavily constrained by significant archaeological potential, which renders it inappropriate to consider further for allocation. The site's location adjoining Solstice Park Business Park, Boscombe Down and the A303 may form a logical extension to the employment use should a need be identified; however heritage constraints are significant. The site is proximate to Boscombe Down which means that preservation of operational capabilities of the aerodrome is a consideration.</p> <p>The site was excluded from consideration due to a low feasible likelihood of satisfactory mitigation of heritage constraints.</p>
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Stage 4 – Selection of Sites

- A25. Stage 4 enabled the results of the sustainability appraisal outcome to be qualitatively examined by consideration of sites in terms of their capability of supporting the Local Plan's objectives for each community – in particular the identified Place Shaping Priorities. Stage 4 also provides discussion and analysis of the scale of growth that would be required to be drawn from the pool of the most sustainable site options, in or to meet the identified housing and employments needs for the settlement.
- A26. The outcome of Stage 4 refines the results of the Stage 3 sustainability appraisal process to identify sites that are more sustainable and support the Local Plan objectives.
- A27. The outcome of Stage 4 of the site selection process for Amesbury can be summarised under the 'What development is proposed' section earlier in this paper. One site was considered through Stage 4 – High Post Site 1: Land at High Post. It was not appropriate to consider the site in the context of Place Shaping Priorities due to the site's isolation from a main settlement, meaning that it could not realistically contribute towards the achievement of these objectives. The site was however subject to further consideration from a strategic context perspective through Stage 4, and it was concluded that based on the outcomes of assessment though the Stage 3 sustainability appraisal, the site has a very low likelihood of achieving satisfactory mitigation of heritage and landscape constraints to deliver a strategic scale of development. The site is of a significant scale on land that rises from the south towards a high point within the local landscape on the northern part of the site. The open, rolling landscape setting and the Old Sarum scheduled monument have potential to be adversely impacted

by significant growth on this site. Smaller, more modest scales of development were also discounted due to potential heritage and landscape impacts, and due to the inability of a smaller scale of development to support sustainable development in an isolated setting.

A28. Existing development at High Post takes the form of a Principal Employment Area which supports a range of locally important economic activities.

A29. Overall, no sites have been identified for development at Amesbury or High Post over the Local Plan period. There is no strategic need to allocate, and the available sites identified at Amesbury and High Post were found to be subject to insurmountable negative impacts as identified through the site selection process making them unsuitable for allocation.

A30. Stage 4 therefore concludes with no site allocations proposed as preferred sites at Amesbury or High Post.

A31. The maps below illustrate the outcome of the site selection process at Amesbury and High Post.



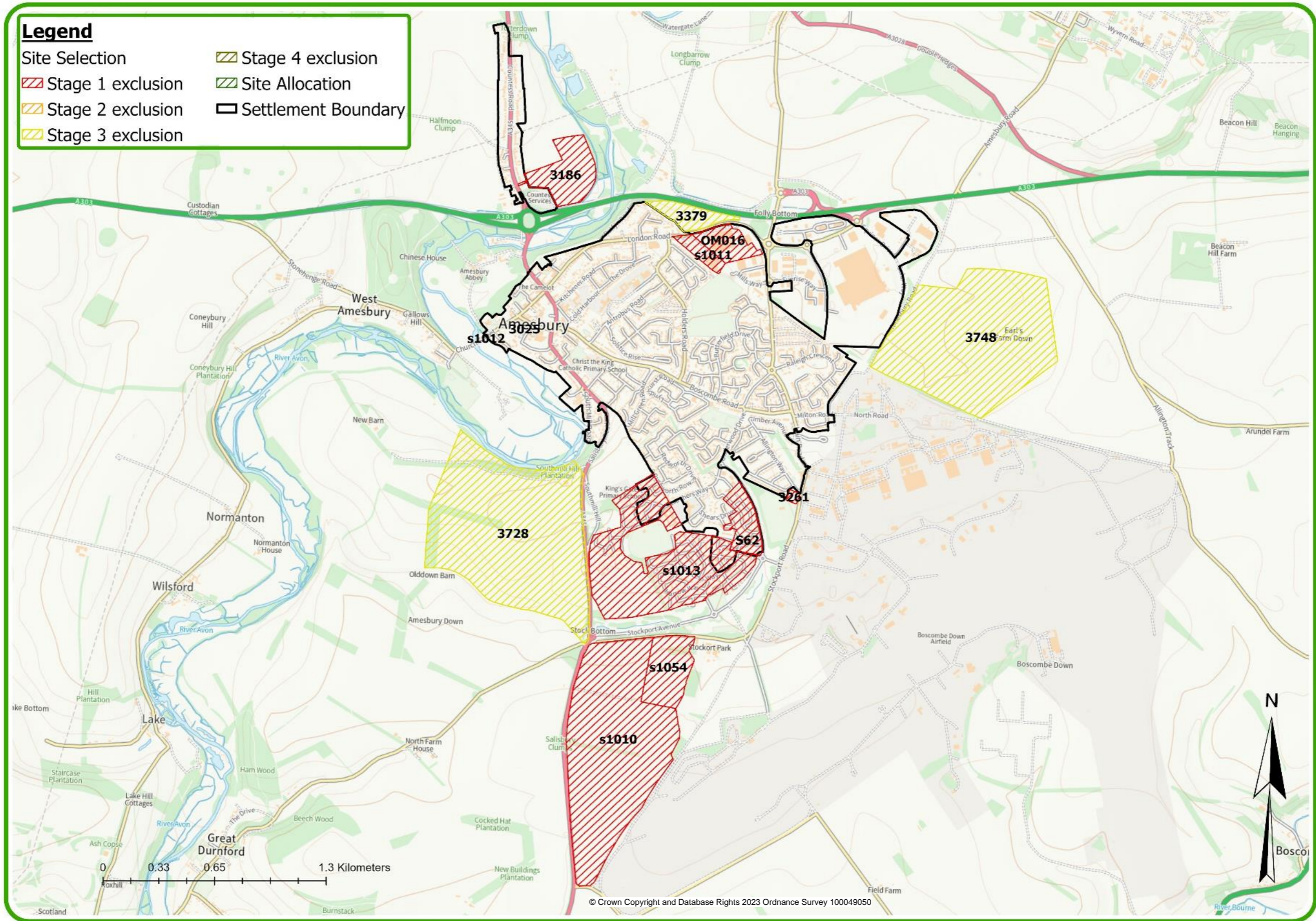


Figure 11. The results of the site selection process at Amesbury

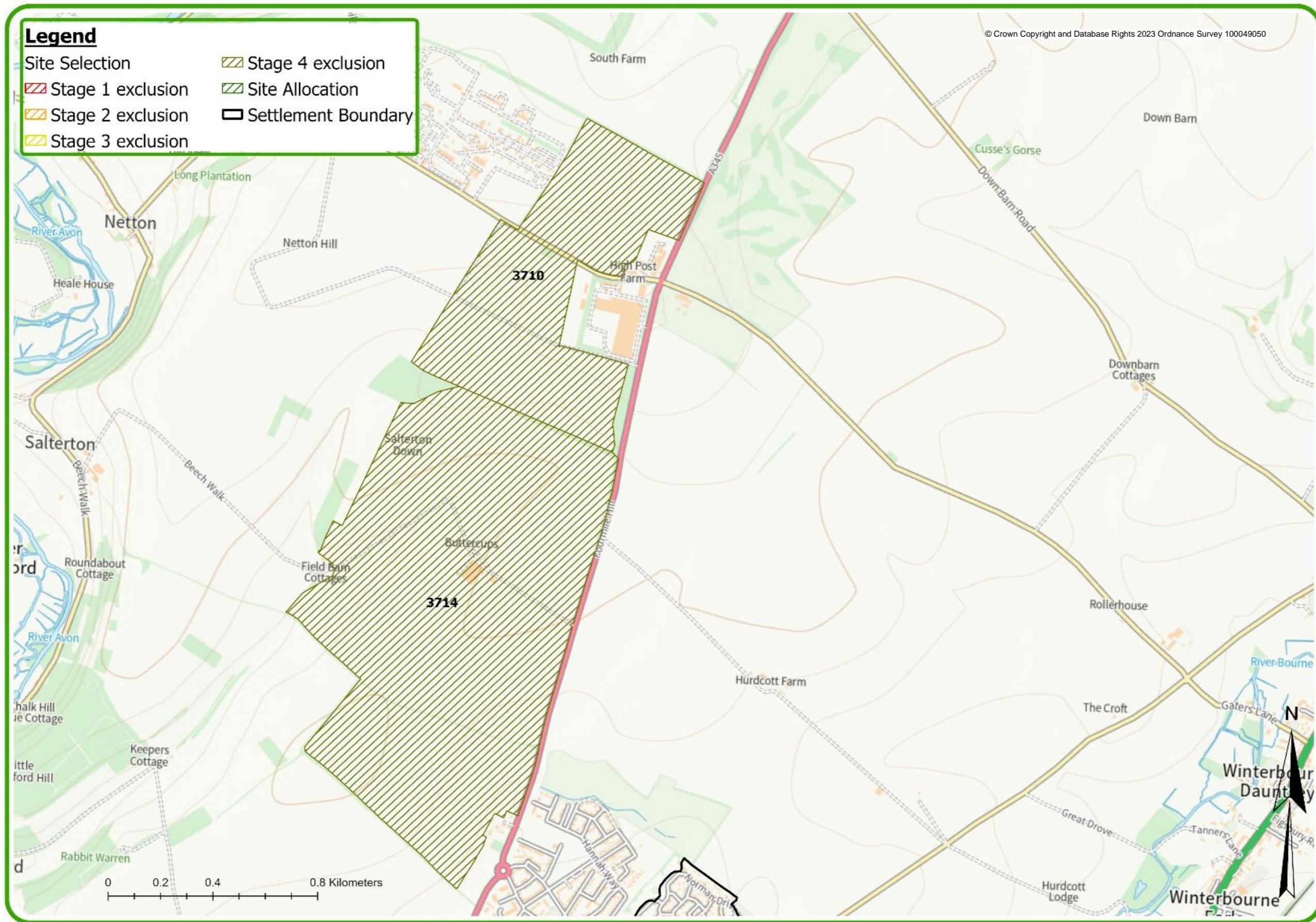


Figure 12. The results of the site selection process at High Post